



## Government of Yukon

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February 5, 2009

### Southern Tutchone Bi-Cultural School Program

WHITEHORSE – A new program to enhance curriculum with Southern Tutchone language and culture at the St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction was announced by Minister of Education Patrick Rouble and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Chief Diane Strand.

"In partnership with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and St. Elias School Council, we are working to enrich the curriculum for all Kindergarten to Grade 2 students at the school," Rouble said. "It is an example of our work to improve achievement of all students and is also a part of our work to eliminate the achievement gap between First Nation and non-First Nation students."

"The bi-cultural program is an incredible opportunity for young learners to become more immersed in our traditional language and culture in the classroom," Strand said. "We are thrilled and proud to pioneer this type of program in Yukon, and to share our language and culture with all Kindergarten to Grade 2 students, not just Southern Tutchone children."

"When the kids bring the language home with them, it encourages parents and family to learn too," Strand added. "The children are our biggest asset to keeping our traditions and language alive."

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' Southern Tutchone Bi-Cultural Program Pilot Project will provide a valuable learning experience for students as well as providing important information that will help shape how the project evolves. A steering committee has been appointed to oversee this project and will be made up of representatives from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Yukon Department of Education, and the St. Elias School Council.

The pilot project will be in effect for a period of four years, and the new curriculum is expected to be delivered in the classrooms, beginning with Kindergarten students, at the start of the next school year.

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